

# A guide to preparing for job interviews

ARIFF AHMED

There are things in life best done without thinking too much about it. A job interview is not one of them. When it comes to interviews, preparation is key. The amount of time one spends preparing has a direct impact on their performance during the interview.

## Do your homework

The first crucial step is research. A good place to start is the company website and social media pages. Pay particular attention to the values and career sections. Don't be afraid to reach out to your network who works in the company you are interviewing for. Use your



connections to find out about the company and what is expected during the interview.

Keep in mind that an employee will have far more insight into a company than any website or social media site does. As Ashraf Shabab, Management Trainee, Human Resources at Unilever Bangladesh, explained, "Understand the organisation and its values – study about it through people, website, Facebook page – and tailor your answers accordingly." Candidates often share their interview experiences on Glassdoor. This is an amazing resource that allows you to familiarise yourself with questions and tasks that other candidates have faced.

If you know who your interviewers are, research them as well. A quick LinkedIn

search will show the interviewers' job and educational details. This information can help an interviewee understand what their interviewers are like. If the interviewee attended the same school or university as the interviewer, they could use this knowledge to build better rapport. Ashraf shared that having alumni in the organisation you want to work in helps a lot.

It is also imperative to study for an interview. Study your coursework and be prepared to answer domain-specific questions. For example, if you are applying to a finance position, study different concepts like profitability ratio, and practice solving problems related to compound interest. Interviewers also expect candidates to be business savvy and have knowledge of the industry they are applying to. If you are applying to company X, which operates in the soap industry, learn about their competitors and what differentiates them. Go into the nitty gritty ties as much as you can.

For technical assessments, use both your coursework and online resources to prepare. YouTube has a lot of videos on how to answer technical assessments. If it's a popular company, chances are high there will be a video with questions previous candidates faced. If your technical assessment took place before the interview, the hiring manager might have follow-up questions about it. Go through the tasks and be prepared to talk about your answers. Fahim mentioned, "When interviewing candidates, I spend 10 to 15 minutes asking questions related to the technical assessment or similar to it."

## Practise dry runs

Perfect your answer to the question: "Tell us about yourself" or "Introduce yourself". The questions are a good way to give the interviewer an overview of your academic, career and extracurricular achievements.

"I think the best way to go about this is to summarise your qualifications and dive deeper into any extracurricular activities that you are particularly strong in. Always play to your strengths and use this question to highlight where you would shine," said Subah Shaheen, a Management Trainee at a telecommunication firm. Candidates can also add their interests which will open a new avenue for discussion.

Before the actual interview, do dry runs. Write down a few questions and answer them verbally. It is better to practice with other

people, especially professionals with experience in interviews. Our interview buddies might come up with questions we never thought of. In addition to that, it will help candidates familiarise themselves with the concept of someone asking questions.

For those attending interviews online, ensure uninterrupted internet and electricity connection. "Camera has to be turned on and the interviewee should sit in an illuminated room," advised Ashraf. One should dress the same way as they would during a physical interview—formalwear for both male and female candidates.

## Know your resume inside out

Interviewers will ask candidates to elaborate on the points mentioned in their resumes. These could be in the form of specific questions about an experience or an overview of a project. Not being able to answer them properly will cast a negative impression. Given the countless projects and tasks each one of us has completed, it is very easy to forget the important details. Jot down these points and make sure they are at the tip of your tongue whenever a question arises.

Companies want people who have relevant experience or skills for the job they are hiring for. Thus, it is important for candidates to match their experience to the job description. Fahim Zaman Anik, Business Intelligence Manager at Foodpanda Bangladesh, explained, "What worked for me when moving from one industry to another was being able to relate my previous experience to the job I was applying for. I had the technical skills, it was just working with different datasets."

Candidates should only mention skills that they are well versed in. Do not put 'Python' just because you have been able to reproduce 'Hello World!'. Interviewers will ask questions to verify the authenticity of your claims. If it's a skill that you have not practised in a while, make sure you do so to ward off any unexpected questions.

## Prepare questions of your own

The last part of this guide deals with the last part of an interview: prepare questions to ask at the end of an interview. "Make sure to ask at least one or two constructive questions at the end. This shows that the interviewee is interested in the company and has done his or her research," added Fahim.



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